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Residents Not So Happy About Happy Valley Pathway

By Cathy Tyson



View of new Happy Valley Road Pathway near Franklin Lane Photo by Cathy Tyson

Earlier this year the City of Lafayette followed their normal protocol and posted notices of an upcoming meeting about sidewalk improvements in the Happy Valley area. Very few residents attended the meeting to review the intended design and construction of Happy Valley pathway modifications from Franklin Lane to Vallory Lane. When the pathway was complete, residents weren't happy and asked that the new pathway be reconfigured.

Given the current budget crunch, the city is reluctant to rebuild the new pathway, especially when the neighbors had a chance to comment early on.

"Staff indicated to the City Council that (the pathway) was designed after consultation with the neighbors at a publicly noticed meeting, is fully compliant with current standards and practices and is consistent with similar facilities city-wide that have operated without any known history of safety issues," said Associate Engineer John M Luttrupp.

Parents expressed their displeasure at a late October City Council meeting. Because of speeding cars and the edge of the walkway abutting the road, residents feel that it's dangerous and would like the pathway modified.

Quite a few children use the pathway on their way to Happy Valley Elementary

school. Since the area immediately around the school can be congested at pick-up and drop-off times, many students walk from Franklin Lane.

In order to solve the sidewalk dilemma a meeting was held in November with concerned residents, city staff, Council Member Brandt Andersson and Bill Bucher, President of the Happy Valley Improvement Association. Residents came to an agreement on a number of issues; first, to paint the existing asphalt berm white. Second, as a temporary solution, the neighbors have volunteered to construct a temporary base rock pathway on private property away from the road and existing pathway, but will need to get the approval of property owners.

What residents really want is to have a permanent pathway away from the edge of the road that would require easements beyond the City's right of way. This option is estimated to cost \$56,000 - although there is \$16,000 in grant money remaining from the Happy Valley Pathway project.

Rumor has it a compromise may be reached at the December 8th City Council meeting.

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